









Lifejacket & PFD Comparison Chart

Learn the difference between a Lifejacket and Personal Flotation Device and how to choose the right one for your vessel and activity.

	Personal Flotation Device (PFD)		
	Lifejacket	Inherently Buoyant	Inflatable
			
BENEFITS	Designed to have the capability to keep a person floating and turn the wearer (conscious or unconscious) onto their back with the head supported and mouth out of the water.	Designed for constant and comfortable wear. Provides minimal protection against cold water depending on the type (vest versus floater coat) – boaters need to dress appropriately for their environment. Multiple approved styles and colours.	Type of PFD that either automatically inflates when immersed in water or must be inflated by wearer manually. Capable of self- righting most wearers once inflated and worn. Freedom of movement and comfort.
DRAWBACKS	Less comfortable.	Less buoyant and limited self-righting capability compared to lifejackets.	Requires annual maintenance and spare cylinders should be on hand (option of manual inflation).
SIZING	Two sizes, based on weight.	Child: Based on body weight. Adult: Based on chest measurements.	Must be over 16 years of age and weigh more than 80 lbs.
STYLE	Keyhole (SOLAS, Standard or Small Vessel).	Vest, bomber, floater suits, keyhole, over-the-head.	Collar (manual or automatic).

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COLOUR	Orange, yellow or red	Variety of colour options	Variety of colour options
FIT	Ensure you can cross your arms under the tied lifejacket for proper flotation.	Snug yet comfortable fit, pull the device at the collar to ensure it does not ride up and interfere with movement or breathing.	
REGULATIONS	SOLAS and Standard lifejackets are approved for all vessels. Small Vessel lifejackets are only approved for small commercial vessels.	Only for use around water or on pleasure crafts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerboats • Personal watercrafts • Canoes, kayaks, rowboats, paddleboats, water cycles • Sailboats, sailboards • Water-skiing, wake boarding, parasailing, tubing, knee-boarding 	Must be worn while on an open boat or worn while on deck in a cockpit. Not approved for children, white water paddling or personal watercraft use.
APPROVAL	Department of Transport (Canada) approved.	Department of Transport (Canada) approved.	Department of Transport (Canada) approved.